

GI'S, IRAQI WORKERS HAVE SAME ENEMY

Imperialism, Nationalism Massacring Tens of Thousands

Is it "sectarian violence" or "civil war?" The politicians' and pundits' debate deliberately obscures the class nature of Iraq's spiraling bloodshed. But a communist analysis indicts the profit system for mass murder there. Nationalist strife led by Shiite, Sunni and Kurdish bosses over political power and oil is joining U.S. imperialism as a major killer of Iraqi workers. Trapped by dead-end nationalist "identity politics," many are committing atrocities in the name of their own religious or ethnic group. But by slaughtering their fellow workers, they're only helping to install a Shiite, Sunni or Kurdish ruling class that will continue their oppression and ally with one imperialist gang or another.

These militia leaders are all dyed-in-the-wool capitalists. Moqtada al-Sadr, Mahdi Army chief, draws his base from Baghdad's Shiite slums. But his wealth comes from oil. His faction controls the transport ministry, which runs pipelines and ports. After the recent Sunni assault on Sadr City, Sadr flexed his economic muscles by shutting down the key oil terminal at Basra. Earlier this year, Sadr sent two companies of working-class fighters to Kirkuk, many to their deaths, to wrest that oil-rich region from Kurdish bosses' hands. Warlords from Saddam Hussein's Sunni sect resent being stripped of state power and the oil profits that flowed from it. Kurdish chiefs, in turn, view the petroleum and population of the North as theirs alone to exploit.

BUSH ERRORS SPARKED INSURGENT BACKLASH

U.S. rulers had planned to control Iraq after the invasion by tripling crude production to six million barrels a day (mbd) and installing leaders of the three main factions as junior partners of Exxon Mobil, Chevron, BP and Shell. But Bush & Co. bungled the job by sending too few troops to secure the oilfields. They disbanded the Iraqi army and police who might have been better able to force the would-be oil barons to comply with the U.S. deal. A vicious cycle has developed instead. With an insufficient U.S.-led coercive apparatus, rival warlords have stepped up their attempts to seize oil facilities. Western oil companies, out of safety fears, refuse to send the engineers and equipment needed to increase production, which has, at times, fallen below the pre-invasion level of two mbd. Greedy Iraqi bosses then fight more bitterly for pieces of a shrinking profit pie and waste the lives of tens of thousands of the people they pretend to serve. Exxon's reluctance grows still further.

An article in the Times of India (10/1/06) offers insights into Iraq's oil-fired infighting; "The biggest oilfields in the country are in the Shia south, and the rest are in the northern Kurdish region. There is no oil in the Sunni triangle in the middle of the country.... The new Constitution of Iraq was long delayed because of heated debates on sharing oil revenue. One constitutional provision says that oil belongs to the people of Iraq in all regions. Yet, the Constitution also gives autonomy to the three regions Shia, Sunni and Kurd. This fuels Sunni fears that the other two regions will ultimately hog all the oil."

BUSH GANG: WIPE OUT THE NATIONALISTS, LIBERALS: PREPARE FOR BIGGER WARS

As the mounting carnage chokes Iraq's oil pump, hamstrung U.S. imperialists are momentarily pursuing a deadly three-pronged policy: use U.S. troops to kill the nationalist insurgents; have the so-called Iraqi government do the job; and then watch the competing nationalists kill one another. On Nov. 25, U.S. forces killed 22 insurgents, and a few civilians at a bomb factory. Iraqi security killed 47 Sunni gunmen the same day. Recently Sunnis and Shiites have been trading car bombs, grenades, kidnappings, and lynchings at a record pace. The New Yorker magazine (11/27/06) quotes a senior U.S. intelligence official as saying, "The White House believes that if American troops

RACIST NYPD MURDERS AGAIN:

50 MORE REASONS TO SMASH CAPITALISM



QUEENS, NY, Nov. 28 — Once again, NYC KKKops have murdered execution style. Police fired 50 bullets at a car carrying three unarmed men — two black and one Puerto Rican — who had just left a bachelor party in Jamaica, Queens. Twenty-one shots hit the car, killing Sean Bell, and injuring the other two. Bell was to be married to the mother of his child later that day. Adding insult to this racist action, cops handcuffed the injured men while they received emergency care at the hospital. The bullets sprayed through the street hit windows, other cars and even a lamp in one man's living room.

The brutality of this murderous attack recalls the 1999 killing of Amadou Diallo, shot 41 times by cops while reaching for his wallet. As with Diallo, the police are now searching for "evidence" to justify their murder.

Many more workers and children have been brutalized and killed since then and, as this latest killing shows, will continue. The cops have proven once again to be hired goons of the rulers who rely on racist terror to try to prevent workers and youth from fighting back. Racism is used by the bosses to divide all workers and to make billions in extra profits from the lower wages paid to black, Latino and immigrant workers.

On Nov. 26, a vigil organized by Democratic Party "activist" and FBI informer Al Sharpton to cool community outrage turned into an angry protest when demonstrators demanded the heads of the killer cops and of Police Commissioner Kelly. But the aim of Sharpton and other politicians is to divert it into demanding an "independent investigation" of the NYPD. Now, even NYC Mayor Bloomberg is "deploring" the incident, taking the liberal road in contrast to former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's more Nazi-like tactics. This is the same Bloomberg who says he can't pay municipal workers enough to keep food on their table (30% must resort to food pantries and food stamps).

But history has shown that essentially nothing will be done to punish the killers. "It is extraordinarily hard to criminally prosecute officers who were on duty," according to CUNY Professor of police science Eugene O'Donnell (NY Daily News, 11/29). Cops will continue to be racist goons because that's the role they serve for the bosses. The entire judicial system is racist to the core. Over two million people are imprisoned in the U.S., 70% of them black and Latino workers, two-thirds for non-violent crimes. Ironically, the black and Latino youth victims of these murders are the very same people who the racist rulers want to recruit to fight and die in Iraq, killing other workers who the oil bosses exploit for billions in profits.

PLP members and friends were on the streets distributing leaflets at City University of NY campuses, on jobs in hospitals and schools and in the Flatbush, Brooklyn neighborhood. (The 25,000-member retirees association of AFSCME's District Council 37 voted to send a letter of condolences to the families of the victims and criticize the unnecessary use of force by the NYPD.)

PLP's message is that workers and youth will get no justice under this system. Just like the KKKops walked free after their brutal beating and/or murders of Rodney King, Abner Louima, Amadou Diallo and thousands of others, they will probably walk free again. The only way to end these racist murders is to arm our class with communist practice and ideas for revolution. Only then will we, the working class, have a world free from murderous cops and the bloody system that they serve. ☸

Inside:

ORGANIZING AGAINST IMPERIALIST WARS INSIDE THE MILITARY

Recently, a forum on anti-war organizing within the military took place in our area. For those who see themselves as revolutionary or anti-imperialist, the forum raised issues such as: What should soldiers organize for? And, who should soldiers ally with in the movement against imperialist war? Related to these was how soldiers should organize in the military.

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Belgian Ww Strikers Seize Plant

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History Shows GI's Can Be Won To Fight Warmakers

ANTI-IMPERIALIST SOLDIERS

**GENERAL,
your tank is a mighty vehicle.
It shatters the forest and crushes a hundred men.
But it has one defect; it needs a driver.**

**GENERAL,
your bomber is awesome.
It flies faster than a hurricane and bears more than
a hundred elephants.
But it has one defect; It needs a mechanic.**

**GENERAL,
a man is quite expendable.
He can fly and he can kill. But he has one defect;
He can think.**

—Bertolt Brecht

Imperialist rivalries always lead to war, whether direct attacks against each other or smaller ones between their clients. These rivalries will eventually lead to World War. Bosses on all sides need to turn millions of workers into soldiers. Communist revolution needs these soldiers and sailors to fight the bosses. PLP members and friends must win soldiers to “turn imperialist war into class war” for workers power.

One of capitalism's weakest links is its difficulty in fielding a reliable army. Since World War 1 to the present, working-class soldiers inside the ranks have rebelled against their wars.

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to smash capitalism — wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim “communism is dead:” capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. Capitalism returned to the Soviet Union and China because socialism failed to wipe out many aspects of the profit system, like wages and division of labor.

Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism — the dictatorship of the proletariat. This fight requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. Everyone will share in society's benefits and burdens.

Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One International working class, one world, one Party.

Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. **Join Us!**

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While millions were being killed in World War I to protect bosses' profits, during Christmas, 1914, British and German troops declared their own battlefield truce, cementing their comradeship with a soccer game. Russia saw masses of soldiers and sailors help turn that imperialist war into history's first successful working-class revolution (see box). In 1919, West Coast longshoremen refused to load munitions being sent to the U.S. military in Siberia trying to crush the Russian Revolution.

In 1945, when World War II ended, tens of thousands of U.S. soldiers, led by left-wing GI's, organized mass protest demonstrations when ordered to stay in the Philippines to fight a communist-led resistance movement there, forcing the brass to send them home.

During the Vietnam War, thousands organized an anti-war movement inside Vietnam and aboard aircraft carriers, publishing 144 underground newspapers and posting bounties on officers marked for execution and fragging many. At one point, sailors' sabotage put six aircraft carriers out of commission, to be returned to San Diego for repairs; 503,000 soldiers deserted.

In June 1971, Marine historian Colonel Robert Heinl wrote an assessment in the Armed Forces Journal entitled, “The Collapse of the U.S. Army”: “The morale, discipline and battle-worthiness of the US armed forces are, with few salient exceptions, lower and worse than at any time in this century and possibly in the history of the United States.”

In Oct. 1971, black sailors led a major rebellion on the USS Kitty Hawk against orders to return to Vietnam —

Red-Led Russian Soldiers, Sailors Turned Their Guns on Bosses

In 1917, rebellion among hundreds of thousands of Russian soldiers and sailors (who literally turned their guns on the bosses) helped establish working-class power. The Bolsheviks (Russian communists) had been organizing inside the military since 1903. They led rebellions in the Navy during the 1905 war with Japan, including the famous insurrection on the battleship Potemkin. Sailors seized the ship to support workers in Odessa rebelling against the Czar.

By 1917, Bolsheviks had developed a pro-communist class base in large sections of the army and navy. Virtually the entire Black Sea fleet, the largest section of the Russian Navy, took the side of the working class. Large units of the Russian Army led the march on St. Petersburg that toppled the old ruling class.

In World War II, while Europe's capitalist armies rolled over with barely a fight, the Soviet Red Army, committed to defending workers' power, smashed the Nazis. In Asia, the Chinese Red Army led the fight against fascist Japanese aggression and crushed the old rulers of China to build a workers' state. ☸

including hand-to-hand battle with Marines trying to smash their shipboard meeting. They had published an anti-war newspaper, “Kitty Litter.” The carrier was essentially removed from war duty.

Vietnamese workers and peasants, lightly armed, with no air support, but greatly inspired by anti-imperialist and red ideas, took on helicopter gunships, tanks, heavy weapons, napalm and horrific bombing attacks, and endured tremendous hardships to wage a successful guerilla war. They demonstrated the triumph of political commitment over technology. Unfortunately, the nationalist leadership of Vietnam has turned that victory around, making the country currently a haven for imperialist investments.

IRAQ

During current imperialist oil wars, the soldiers' role will be crucial. So far, they have mostly followed orders to kill other workers in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, there have also been small signs of resistance. In 2004, the Army's 343rd Quartermaster Company refused its orders. Many GI's with anti-war feelings have refused redeployment. However, most resistance has been individual acts without anti-imperialist class-consciousness that would threaten the rulers' plans.

The liberal Democrats have long condemned Rumsfeld's refusal to field an army capable of securing Mid-East oil. Now that they control Congress, they're already calling for “more representative” armed forces to fight future wars. Their main difference with the Bushites is how to wage profit wars more “efficiently.”

Without a committed military, the bosses cannot hold and expand power. Conversely, a revolutionary-led armed working class and a red army is essential to winning state power, as the Russian and Chinese revolutions demonstrated (see box).

War cannot be waged merely by a handful of politicians sitting in offices pushing buttons that release devastation. Imperialists need millions of patriotic soldiers and workers in war factories to fight for the bosses' interests instead of their own. Rebellions by these workers and soldiers would inspire workers everywhere to sharpen the class struggle to destroy capitalism.

Only communist ideas will give soldiers the ability to liberate themselves and the working class from the rulers and their endless profit wars. In the past, communist ideas have inspired soldiers to side with the working class and refuse orders to kill for imperialism. We in PLP are fighting to make this happen again. Join us. ☸

GI'S, IRAQI WORKERS HAVE SAME ENEMY

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stay in Iraq long enough — with enough troops — the bad guys will wind up killing each other.”

Establishment liberals think they have a better plan than the Bush gang. Despite the phony talk among Democrats and James Baker's Iraq Study Group of withdrawal and of dealing with Iran, a consensus is emerging for a “big push,” a reinforcement of U.S. troop strength to wipe out both Sunni and Shia nationalists in Baghdad and elsewhere. Abandoning Iraq is simply not an option for U.S. rulers. And Iran's ayatollahs have no interest in yielding to U.S. demands. Anthony Cordesman, strategy chairman at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a major Establishment policy-shaper, says, “The worst solution is still an ‘exit strategy.’ If Iraq can be made to work at any level, it will be worth...making a long-term commitment.... An Iraq divided or in a power vacuum affects a region with 60 per cent of the world's proven conventional oil reserves and 37 per cent of its natural gas.

A de facto victory for Sunni Islamist extremists will challenge every moderate regime and political movement in the Middle East.” (Financial Times, 5/3/06)

Shiite nationalism poses just as big a threat. Seventy percent of Saudi Arabia's vast oil reserves, the cornerstone of U.S. imperialism, lie in the Shia-dominated Gulf shore. Both the Saudi royal family and its U.S. backers are paranoid about the possibility that these Shias, abetted by Iran (and now Iraq), will secede and take the oilfields with them.

LIBERALS SEEK UNIVERSAL ‘SERVICE,’ WAR DECLARATION

A U.S. failure to counter Mid-East nationalism today will set back its efforts to combat imperialist rivals down the road. Recent editorials in the liberal Establishment's New York Times has alluded to the general military mobilization U.S. rulers need to reverse their downslide. The Nov. 26 piece gave the Pentagon the task of “figuring out why the Bush administration's military plans worked out so badly and drawing lessons for future conflicts.”

While rejecting the word “draft,” the Times (11/21) praised politicians who said “the United States should require all young people to devote a year or two to service after high school or college.” The bosses' “newspaper of record” had earlier (11/19) called for “a Congress willing to resume its proper constitutional role in debating and deciding essential questions of war and peace.” The Times thus appealed to newly-elected Democrats to help win the public to the imperialist agenda and seriously consider legitimizing it with a declaration of war.

U.S. rulers and their nationalist opponents must resort to racism and phony anti-imperialism to recruit the foot soldiers they require to protect their profits. The class interests of GIs and al-Sadr's militiamen, however, are identical. They lie in rebelling against their “leaders” and building a party that can replace imperialist and nationalist bloodshed with communist revolution. ☸

Fight the Bosses, Not Each Other — Students Lead Anti-Racist Struggle

BROOKLYN, NY, Nov. 27 — The bosses' Flag Day — when students bring flags representing countries from which their families immigrated — is always divisive. Every year the school promotes Flag Day. This year it provoked a stabbing. Someone stepped and spit on a Haitian flag. This created a crisis.

The administration only organized some meetings. But many teachers and students were concerned. Problems previously ignored now surfaced: racism, overcrowding, lousy food, increased dictatorial discipline, too few books, administrative bungling. All this had already increased the stress level in the school; the stabbing incident brought everything to a head.

Students immediately provided leadership. Student clubs work together organizing unity activities. Many teachers want to help. Communists are in the thick of things. A plan is formulated. All kinds of discussions occur. Optimism replaces cynicism. More and more students and staff get involved. Activity replaces passivity, as students from many nationalities take charge and work together.

The nature of education becomes a big debate. One student hits it right on the mark: the purpose of schools is to sort out the students, divide them up and re-create

capitalism's inequalities. Others say that fighting racism and promoting working-class unity should be a lifetime struggle. Both students and staff voice opposition to future "flag day" events and oppose the politicians' opportunistic involvement in student and staff activities. Some take on more study and reading, becoming more interested in the larger inequalities of the system.

A unified plan is presented to the administration. The principal agrees to it, surprising since the administrators had been doing nothing. Some Department of Education (DOE) "suits" had visited the building and made some promises on longstanding problems. We're not holding our breaths.

Mass discussion begins on: Are we doing the administration's job in organizing these activities, as one teacher said? Are we cleaning up the DOE's and administration's mess? Why aren't they doing much of anything?

This led to understanding that the administration is just following the lead of Mayor Bloomberg as he organizes more direct control of NYC schools. More security, more cameras, more obedience to stupid rules such as a ban on cell phones in school — all this is the order of the day and administrators are the front line in enforcing it. They're preparing young people to be patriotic and obe-



BROOKLYN, NY 2005 — Brooklyn youth proudly carried the international working-class red flags of communism.

dient as the bosses prepare for more imperialist wars (with Harlem's liberal Charles Rangel calling for re-instatement of the draft).

Our job is building a movement for communism to fight for workers' power, against racism and all of capitalism's inequalities. While Democrats call for more troops in Iraq, we should call for more staff and students to join the lifelong struggle against capitalism. As we get more deeply involved in organizing unity, many are already discussing the larger issues reported in CHALLENGE.

In the short run, if we don't fight each other we can use the unity we create to fight the bosses for the long run. ☛

Belgian VW Strikers Take Over Plant in Battle vs. Mass Layoff

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, Nov. 24 — The layoff of 4,000 Volkswagen workers here and threatened closing of the 5,400-worker plant contains the potential of a general strike.

Since Nov. 17, VW workers — many of them immigrants — have been on strike and have occupied the Forest plant around the clock to prevent the company from shipping out finished cars and dismantling machinery. Workers used burning barricades to block the major highway leading out of the city to the Veret suburb while picketing workers from other industries were surrounding the plant.

Thousands of jobs in subsidiary and supplier plants will be wiped out, a catastrophe in a region already suffering from an official 21% unemployment rate. "For each job at the plant," declared Nico Cue, a metal workers union leader, "you have to reckon two jobs outside the plant. So 12,000 jobs are at stake." (In the U.S., with 30 times Belgium's ten million population, this would mean a loss of 360,000 U.S. jobs.)

Strikers have been sharply critical and political. One said, "The European trade unions are nothing more than puppets....doing nothing about social issues." Another referred to the war in Iraq, declaring, it's "a war...[for] big business. Generations will suffer because of it....This is one reason I am standing here,....for them, not just for myself."

Ibisi Ramadam, an Arab workers and a five-year veteran of the assembly lines, referring to the huge joblessness, said, "Now there will be 4,000 more.... I don't know if one can trust them [the unions]....The problem is the capitalist system."

VW bosses say they must shift the entire production of the Golf model to Germany as a cost-cutting maneuver to compete against global competition. Their lieutenants in Germany's largest union, IG Metall, are cooperating to the hilt. They've already agreed to a 4-hour increase in the VW work-week without full compensation in the plant to which Golf production is being shifted, while VW is in the process of cutting 20,000 jobs throughout Germany.

VW bosses have literally bought off union representatives on the Works Council in Germany. The Council's former head raked in an annual "bonus" of 693,000 euros [over \$800,000] over and above his regular salary. Works Council members also received luxury trips, including visits to brothels. These union "leaders" collusion knows no shame.

Workers at all VW plants across Europe are being affected, but the European Works Council refuses to organize a united struggle against the company offensive,



seeking rather to pit one plant or location against the other. Belgian unionists are accusing the German auto union of betraying themselves and other auto workers throughout Europe. VW's attempt to appease the Belgian workers by promising to shift production of the Polo model from Pamplona, Spain to this Golf plant was rejected by the workers here, one saying, "They are trying to play off one workforce against another."

While the Belgian government has been acting "concerned" about the layoffs, when receiving advance notification from VW about the cuts, VW said the government "promised us their support." (Frankfurter Rundschau, 11/21)

VW strikers have been marching to company headquarters, to a company garage and to subcontractors. The local union leader has promised new demonstrations every day, building up to a major national demonstration on December 2. Rank and filers have been criticizing the leadership for not sharpening the struggle.

Meanwhile, labor action in Belgium continues to grow. Railway workers protesting new work schedules, struck Antwerp's main station, halting two-thirds of all rail traffic; 1,500 government workers (hospital and social services) demonstrated outside the Treasury here, demanding a €20 monthly increase — most now earn less than €1,000 a month; and air controllers and technicians held a one-hour strike in two cities against lousy working conditions.

At the root of the attacks on the VW workers is capitalism's worldwide auto company rivalry, all bosses trying to capture as big a share of the market as possible, leading to overproduction and then cuts in labor costs. GM and Ford workers in the U.S. are suffering the consequences of the system's anarchy of production. And all these trade wars are helping to stoke military wars, the ultimate "solution" to inter-imperialist rivalry.

Right now, auto workers must unite internationally against this onslaught which pits one company's workers against all the others. The key is to turn these struggles into one pointing to the real solution — destroying a system based on profits which takes out its losses on workers' backs, and erecting a working-class-run system without profits and bosses, based on serving workers' needs: communism. That's PLP's goal. ☛

To read more about European outsourcing, see box page 7

ORGANIZING AGAINST IMPERIALIST WARS INSIDE THE MILITARY

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After opening comments from the organizers, two petitions were read to the approximately 100 people in the audience. The first was the "Appeal for Redress" being circulated among soldiers in Iraq and at military bases elsewhere. That petition identifies each signer as a "patriotic" American who "respectfully" urges politicians to bring the troops home.

The other petition, being circulated within the National Guard and Reserves, calls on Congress to guarantee that when these soldiers are called to active duty they not suffer any loss of job income as a result of the deployment. Neither petition indicates politicians from both parties supported the war. Neither party supports pulling U.S. soldiers out of the Middle East. That's because the main concern is controlling the region's oil.

After the petitions were distributed to the audience, three soldiers spoke about having opposed the war to many of their fellow soldiers while in Iraq, using the internet as well as person-to-person contact. They communicated with each other during their time in Iraq. At least one was brought up on charges for his anti-war organizing. Their comments showed they were sincere, resourceful and courageous.

Two of the three soldiers said that they were fighting for the principles established in the U.S. Constitution. One referred to the "Founding Fathers" in positive terms, although the third soldier commented that slavery and voting restrictions were their legacy. All three soldiers appeared to favorably view the fight to "restore democracy" both inside and outside the military.

After that, members of the audience spoke. All praised the soldiers for their boldness and fighting spirit. Two people sharply attacked the U.S. Constitution. One said the main thing the Constitution protects is the property of the ruling class, not "human rights." He called on soldiers to identify their interests with those of the working class, and said that imperialist wars will never end until the system that causes them is brought down. He was strongly applauded by the audience.

In response, one of the forum organizers said that if a mass movement of soldiers was ready to go to Washington to restore the Constitution, he would be there. His comments implied uncritical support. This "leftist" also promoted the movement for "democracy" within the military.

The bosses' Constitution and their whole legal system are designed to maintain their power and keep all challenges within their ground rules. Organizing within the military against imperialist wars is against those rules. PLP believes that soldiers will eventually reject misleaders who have no confidence that soldiers, like workers, can, as the German communist playwright Brecht said, realize their revolutionary potential. Soldiers can and will opt for armed struggle against capitalism, both inside the military and out. That's the only way to stop the sacrificing of workers' blood on the altars of the profit system. ☛

NYC Teachers Must Sharpen Class Struggle, Reject Contract Bribes

Educators in New York City witness crimes on a daily basis: racist patterns in illiteracy and innumeracy; a testing regime designed to reproduce capitalist social inequality; overcrowding, resulting in frustration and student fights; graduates forced into uniform by an economic draft and sent to fight and die for U.S. imperialism in the Middle East.

The U.S. ruling class needs to prevent teachers and students from fighting back against these crimes and instead to win them to willingly fill their places in the system as it prepares for continuous war.

New York's teachers' union, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), recently made a deal with the City for a new contract that includes a 7% pay raise, a \$750 signing bonus and no give-backs on benefits. For the first time in many years an agreement was reached before the contract deadline and without major concessions by the union. Many teachers hailed this settlement as a victory. But this contract is not designed to benefit teachers and students at all; it does not recover any concessions given away in previous contracts nor does it address the real needs of working-class students.

No amount of money put into the schools can change their role under capitalism, but the rulers hope that by spending a limited amount they can divert workers from the inherent inequalities of the

system while more efficiently winning students to capitalist ideas. This contract bribes teachers in an attempt to win their loyalty to the system, not to the students and parents who are their class brothers and sisters.

Throughout many years of patient work at the UFT Delegate Assembly and at annual nationwide conventions, PLP teachers have exposed the liberals, including the union leadership, as the main danger to the working class. They try to deceive us into ignoring or even supporting imperialist war and growing fascism. CHALLENGE is known by a good chunk of the thousand-plus delegates who attend the monthly meetings of NYC union reps.

So, when at the November 8 Delegate Assembly a PLP teacher took UFT president Randi Weingarten to task for suggesting that the Democratic sweep of Congress meant "we are going to bring our troops home from Iraq," silence fell on the hall; she was forced to eat her words. Two subsequent PLP speak-

ers took the floor exposing the union's "Safe Secure Schools" initiative as a thinly-veiled racist attack on students. They declared a contract which does not put students first should be rejected.

This struggle is being built in individual schools as well. In one high school a chapter chairperson returned energized by the anti-war and pro-student speeches and made a point of reporting them to the rank and file. He is urging teachers to reject the contract. At that school the "Safe Secure School" initiative is on the agenda for the next union meeting. At another school, where a communist delegate was elected last spring, CHALLENGE distribution among teachers has spiked

moderately in the wake of this fight.

These struggles in individual schools can lead to a more profound fight against the ruling class's goals. Teacher strikes in Detroit and Oaxaca point the direction for teachers, one of intensifying class struggle and rejecting class collaboration. We must cultivate the revolutionary seeds we plant with strong collectivity, planning and leadership. When teachers, parents and students are won to communist politics on various levels amid these struggles, the workers of the world are winning. The Progressive Labor Party is working toward that goal. Join us! ☛

Don't Be A Sucker for Bosses' Schemes

The recent teachers' union contract represents a different ruling-class plan for teachers than for other workers. The current fiasco in Iraq exposes a serious long-term weakness: U.S. workers are not committed to sacrificing for the "greater good" of U.S. capitalism. They need teachers to shape loyal subjects for U.S. imperialism. This may require paying us off with raises and even the appearance of "improved" working conditions in which to indoctrinate the youth with patriotism.

U.S. rulers answer this crisis with both force and deception. Racist attacks on black and Latino students will continue apace and form the backdrop to every educational "reform"; yet it's easy to be deceived. New York courts have just ordered the state to pay an extra \$2 billion (down from \$4bn) into the school system. The news media is peppered with reports on falling science and math scores. But these reports invariably place competition between the next generations of U.S. and particularly Asian students front and center. Cynical whining about an "achievement gap" between black and white youth in the land of chattel slavery, Jim Crow and worsening segregation today hides a reality — black workers are still crucial to every major industrial and military operation of U.S. imperialism and cannot be totally written out of the economy, driven toward rebellion by a school system that targets them for educational destruction. This is true for Latino workers and youth as well.

PLP calls on teachers to undermine the bosses' project. In a "teacher's fight" we must remember that the main group under attack in the schools is always the youth. Based on this understanding, unbreakable unity between teachers and students can be built. In unity with revolutionary industrial workers and soldiers, teachers can play a key role in the fight to destroy world imperialism. ☛

Transit Union Election Scheming Shows Need For Red Leadership

NEW YORK CITY, Nov. 22 — A host of candidates are challenging Roger Toussaint, head of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 in the union's current presidential election. All the phonies vying for that post were either opposed to last year's strike or propose appealing to the newly-elected Democratic politicians for a "fair shake." None propose to organize the rank and file for mass struggle against the capitalist class that depends on mass transit to keep its profits rolling in.

Toussaint himself is not even a "lesser evil" among this motley crew. A militant rank and file forced a massive illegal strike which shut the transit system, showed the potential strength of the working class and enjoyed enormous support from the worker-riders. Yet Toussaint agreed to a contract that included a payroll-deduction for health benefits, a wage "increase" lower than the inflation rate — amounting to a wage CUT — surrendering of the important December contract expiration date, and a secret deal during the 3-day strike that wasn't revealed to the membership until this past November. The rank and file rejected this contract because it was part of an attack on all workers' health and pension benefits nationwide. They are still without a contract a year later.

Neither Toussaint nor his presidential opponents will organize transit workers for anti-capitalist class struggle. None will expose the role of the Wall Street banks which reap hundreds of millions in profits from the interest collected in loans to keep the transit system afloat. And none of these labor fakers do very much, if anything, to unite the workers who ride the subways and buses with those who operate them.

Compare that with the communist leadership given the transit workers in Washington, D.C.'s Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689 by the slate led by its PLP president. Not only do they advocate striking and other militant actions to fight for demands and defend against give-backs but they organize and prepare the rank and file for just such

struggles. During such a strike, they would expose the role of the bosses' state in using the cops, National Guard and Army to try to smash workers' militant actions — there's no such thing as a "neutral" government under capitalism.

Communist leadership tries to build anti-racist unity and solidarity within the working class — among black, Latin, Asian and white workers; young and old; men and women; city-wide and throughout the transit industry. Red leadership shows how the bosses squeeze the workers' lives to pay for imperialist wars in Iraq and elsewhere. Communist leadership thus helps workers learn that their struggles can only be won by destroying the profit system of capitalism. Through this process of struggle and education, transit workers are recruited to PLP, the organization that can lead the working class towards that goal.

Communist leadership cannot guarantee victory in reform demands since the capitalists run the government and armed forces, but it can lead a vigorous fight against racism as the most urgent need of the working class to cement its solidarity as a class.

For example, under red leadership Local 689 forced the transit bosses to reduce the number of years it takes young, mainly black workers to reach the top wage rate, thus beginning to reverse the racist, cost-cutting, divisive attack on Metro's labor force to which the previous leadership had agreed.

Contrary to the communist approach of mobilizing the rank and file for struggle, the TWU hacks lead the workers into the arms of the bosses by depending on liberal politicians who represent those same bosses. All NYC mayors, whether Democrat or Republican, have always enforced the strike-busting Taylor Law against municipal workers. Thus, the reformist Toussaint leadership, rejected the political lessons of the 1965 transit strike when the workers broke the anti-strike law.

New York transit workers need red leadership and communist ideas to wage a fight for their class interests, to see that no matter what gains they can wrest from the bosses, the latter with its state power, laws and system based on profits will always be able to take them away, just as they're attempting to do now with their hard-won health benefits. To guarantee permanent victory, PLP must win transit workers to the anti-capitalist struggle for communism so that our class can conquer political power through revolution and rule in its own interests. ☛

Protest Police-State Attack on UCLA Iranian Student

LOS ANGELES — On Nov. 14, Mostafa Tabatabaiejad — a student of Iranian descent — was studying at UCLA's main library when he was attacked by the racist campus police with a taser gun. Outraged at this racist police brutality, several days later hundreds of UCLA students and faculty — organized by Muslim student groups and others — marched across campus protesting the attack.

Security personnel had approached Mostafa asking for his school ID, since it was past 11 PM. Initially he refused to cooperate, maintaining they were singling him out based on his Middle Eastern appearance. Eventually, Mostafa agreed to leave the library, but as he did so, campus cop Terrence Duren arrived and attacked him with a taser gun. (LA Times, 11/17) Since 2001, Duren has been the subject of two other use-of-force complaints. (LA Times, 11/21)

This assault on a student of Middle Eastern descent by racist university police exposes the cops' role under capitalism to be to enforce racist oppression and maintain the racist status quo, whether at school, work, or in our neighborhoods. That this incident occurred at UCLA in particular is especially significant in light of black students' recent protests of the school's racist admissions policy. Since Affirmative Action ended, the black student population has plummeted across the University of California system, but especially at UCLA where the 2006 incoming freshmen class of nearly 5,000 students includes only 96 black students. (www.newsroom.ucla.edu)

This incident also betrays the universities' role under capitalism. Despite claiming to be "a place of learning" and of "freedom of speech," it is, in fact, where much of the racist ideology that justifies fascist oppression and imperialist wars abroad is created. UCLA is home to professor emeritus James Q. Wilson who, at Harvard in the early 1980's, co-authored the "Broken Windows" theory with George Kelling which called for zero tolerance strategies for dealing with crime in the inner cities. (Atlantic Monthly, March 1982)

In other words, this theory would intensify the level of racist oppression already experienced by Latino and black workers in urban centers. NYC's Mayor Giuliani put it into practice in the 1990's with his chief of police Bratton, who's now using it in L.A.

Additionally, these strategies have played well into the development of a police state since 9/11. The attack on this UCLA student is but one example. More recently was the brutal slaying of Sean Bell (his minivan shot 50 times) by undercover cops in Queens, NY (see front page).

The increased anti-Muslim, anti-Middle Eastern racism generated in the U.S. is the same kind used to justify the genocide being committed by U.S. imperialism against our working-class brothers and sisters in the Middle East. From there to L.A., workers and students need to unite against racist terror and the capitalist system that spawns it. ☛

U.S. Pols, Profits Behind Africa’s First ‘World War’

Madeleine Albright, Clinton’s Secretary of State, labeled the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Africa’s “first world war.” She should know. Her government and U.S. companies were deeply involved in this war which has killed more people than any other conflict since World War II. Tied to this war are such ruling-class figures as Presidents Bush, Sr. and Clinton, black politicians like Andrew Young and Vernon Jordan, and corporations like Chevron-Texaco, Royal Dutch-Shell and Coca-Cola.

It began a decade ago when forces led by pro-U.S. Uganda and Rwanda overthrew former dictator Mobutu. At the end of the Cold War, the CIA dropped Mobutu (just like it dropped Osama bin Laden), so he became a French imperialist agent. According to Lancet, the British Medical Journal, over three million have died in this war (some estimate nearly 10 million).

Despite a ceasefire reached two years ago, the killings continue between supporters of former rebel Jean-Pierre Bemba and President Kabila’s government troops. Bemba is disputing Kabila’s electoral victory in the second round of the presidential elections.

As reported last issue (11/29), conflicts in Africa are called “tribal” and “ethnic,” but they really involve control of the continent’s mineral wealth. The Congo is three-fourths the size of Western Europe.

The plundering by imperialist companies and their regional warlords of diamonds, gold, columbium tantalite (coltan), niobium, cobalt, copper, uranium and petroleum has taken a giant step forward. Some \$6 million in raw cobalt alone — an element of super-alloys essential for nuclear, chemical, aerospace and arms industries — exits

the DRC daily.

A Human Rights Watch (HRW) 2005 report, “The Curse of Gold,” exposed Ugandan officials’ and multinational corporations’ smuggling of gold through local rebel militias. The western companies targeted by HRW were Anglo-Ashanti Gold, a company headquartered in South Africa, and Metalor, a Swedish firm. But HRW didn’t report that Anglo-Ashanti is partnered with Anglo-American, owned by the Oppenheimer family, and with Canada-based Barrick Gold (described below). London-based Anglo-American Plc. owns a 45% share in DeBeers, another Oppenheimer company, infamous for its near monopoly of the international diamond industry. Sir Mark Moody-Stuart, a director of Anglo-American, is a director of Royal Dutch/Shell and a member of U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan’s Advisory Board. The report also suppressed the most damning evidence discovered by HRW researchers — that Anglo-Ashanti sent its top lawyers into eastern DRC to aid arrested rebel militia leaders.

Bush, Sr. served as a paid advisor for Barrick Gold. Vernon Jordan, a Clinton lawyer, also served on Barrick’s

Board, a client of the lobbying group of another black politician, Andrew Young, former Mayor of Atlanta and Clinton’s U.S. UN ambassador. Young was a key organizer of the U.S.-Uganda Friendship Council. In October 1994 Clinton picked him to lead the Southern Africa Enterprise Development Fund. Young’s lobbying group has among its clients Chevron-Texaco, Coke, Monsanto and the governments of Angola and Nigeria.

In Congo’s Katanga (Shaba) province, militias and racketeering are linked to criminal networks of businessmen, including Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe, Billy Rautenbach, John Bredenkamp, and Marc Rich. U.S. diamond magnate Maurice Tempelsman has profited from Katanga concessions since the Kennedy era. Lawrence Devlin, the old CIA station chief of Lubumbashi under Eisenhower, maintained Tempelsman’s criminal rackets with direct ties to Zaire’s former President Mobutu, and was subsequently employed by Tempelsman.

The Congo is also rich in coltan ore, whose refined product is tantalum. The U.S. is entirely dependent on foreign sources for tantalum, an enabling technology for capacitors essential to aerospace weaponry and every pager, cell phone, computer, VCR, CD player, P.D.A. and TV. U.S. import records show a dramatic jump in purchases from Rwanda and Uganda during the time they were smuggling tantalum and cobalt out of the Congo.

So while U.S. rulers make a big deal about the situation in Darfur (where China is extracting oil), they keep a low profile on the Congo. (Information from an article in Znet magazine by Keith Harmon Snow and David Barouski.) More in a future issue.☸

Racism Killing Immigrant Construction Workers

NEW YORK CITY, Nov. 21 — “His dream was to save money and go back home,” said construction worker Julio Jara. But that dream was shattered forever when his brother, 25-year-old Clever Jara, fell 17 stories to his death near Union Square in Manhattan. The Ecuadorian immigrant was putting up netting to prevent bricks from falling during repair work on the building’s façade. Witnesses said wind gusts may have caused him to slip from the building’s ledge.

Twenty-four construction workers died in the city last year, “making it New York’s most deadly profession, according to a federal Labor Department report.” (NY Daily News. 11/2) “At least 98 construction workers in the city have been killed since October 2001, most of them in mishaps involving safety regulations or building codes.” (Daily News, 11/5)

A good many of the construction workers repairing building facades here are Latino and other immigrants, forced to work under hazardous conditions in order to support their families, both here and in their home countries. Amid a building boom, scofflaw developers are allowed to “self-certify” themselves, so they simply ignore safety and pursue profits. When 27-year-old Arturo Gonzalez was struck and killed last year by an 800-pound steel girder, the Buildings Department “fined” the realtor and owner the grand sum of \$1,400!

The racism of building contractors like Town Restoration — the company fixing the above façade — was evident in their ignoring safety precautions for these predominantly Latino immigrant workers. The company didn’t have the proper permit for the project, maintained no on-site supervision and apparently had not provided Clever with the proper training for the job, given the absence of such certification. Workers trained for the rigs were not on the site.

According to the latest OSHA “report card” on construction-site deaths, 86% occur on non-union jobs. And the vast majority of these jobs involve immigrant laborers and therefore many cases are unreported. “When a union guy is injured, reports are filed,” according to immigrant lawyer David Perecman, but when it involves undocumented workers, “the boss tells them if it still hurts in the morning go to the hospital and tell them you tripped and fell.”

Alongside this is the racism of the construction unions which historically have refused to admit or organize black and Latino workers, so now the chickens come home to roost — thousands of construction workers are unorganized and prey to the bosses lowering wages and conditions for all workers.

While anti-immigrant hysteria is whipped up against workers like Clever Jara, they end up sacrificing their lives for profiteering bosses who figure they can get away with it because such workers are “expendable” — more evidence that a system that produces such needless deaths must be destroyed.☸

Savage Fascist Assault on Oaxaca Rebels Shows Capitalism Can’t be Reformed

OAXACA, MEXICO, Nov. 28 — Supported by thousands of federal troops, soldiers, judges, courts, jails and the Mexican bosses’ Constitution, the fascist murderous governor of Oaxaca, Ulises Ruiz, declared: “There will be no pardon” for the striking teachers and their working-class supporters who fought the bosses for six months. Immediately he launched a witch-hunt against thousands of leaders and members of APPO (Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca).

Hundreds of houses were raided, APPO offices were burned down and hundreds were arrested, beaten and tortured. Hundreds more were arrested after Ruiz goons and federal troops occupying Oaxaca viciously attacked a November 25 APPO march.

Many of those arrested are in federal prisons outside Oaxaca. The entire capitalist state apparatus has been used to smash the Oaxaca rebels.



Workers and their allies are learning from these experiences about the fascist nature of the bosses’ “democratic” mask to curb any mass fight-back.

Unfortunately, the APPO leadership (some of whom had illusions that the federal troops would control Ruiz’s local goons) is just fighting to reform capitalism — to get rid of Ruiz, for “more democracy,” etc. Many workers and others also have illusions that Lopez Obrador and the opposition PRD are their friends. Obrador declared himself the “legitimate President” following the fraudulent “election” that made Calderón of the ruling PAN party the new President. All these politicians represent different versions of which capitalist and imperialist faction best to serve and how to best exploit workers.

The struggle in Oaxaca has revealed much about the class struggle; the need to fight racism against indigenous people; the militancy of teachers, urban and city workers and students; and the importance of international solidarity. But the main lesson is that capitalism cannot be reformed.

The only liberation for workers and their allies will grow from fighting for revolutionary power to build a communist society without any bosses and their racism. We need a mass PLP rooted in the working class to step up this struggle, from Oaxaca to L.A. to Karachi. And then workers and their allies won’t “pardon” any bosses and their goons.☸

LETTERS

Send Letters to CHALLENGE PERIODICALS, V B N M
PO 808, Brooklyn NY 11202 or email, cd188@juno.com

Racial Injustice and Ecological Survival

This fall our church, along with our interfaith coalition, sponsored a conference about sharpening the struggle against racism and imperialism by exposing how the rulers are destroying the world ecosystem, leaving working people totally vulnerable to the resulting devastation. The participants were an interesting multi-racial mix of over 70 workers and students. The event grew from political discussions of our production of Shakespeare's "The Tempest" last winter as a fund-raiser for Katrina victims.

For almost 40 years, the ruling class's ecology movement has focused on separating mainly white, "middle class" workers and students from the most exploited of our sisters and brothers with the line "Love the Earth; Ignore (or Screw) the Workers." In sharp contrast, the scholar-activist who keynoted our morning gatherings, showed how the essential nature of capitalism is to exploit both workers and the resources of the environment to the MAXIMUM in order to extract the highest possible profits from every economic activity.

Because this brutal system is now universally dominant worldwide, he explained that both increasingly deadly wars for resources and markets, AND the worst predictions of ecological collapse are inevitable under capitalism. While the speaker was very knowledgeable, it was clear from his presentations and discussions that he's been very active with workers and students most of his life, in Central America, South Africa and the U.S.

Students and teachers led a workshop about their experiences as volunteers in New Orleans this summer. They explained how the nationalist and reformist orientations of the sponsoring organizations divided and demoralized workers and students, exposed how volunteer work was being co-opted for bosses' profits, and described how the capitalists' roadblocks to rebuilding the entire city, excluding many life-long residents, proves that communist revolution is the only answer.

Parents made an inspiring presentation of their ongoing struggle to ensure that black and Latino children had every opportunity for admission to the city's few more effective schools. They were very open to linking their work to the larger movement (of which PLP is a part) to expose capitalist education as racist and imperialist, and to broaden the struggle to include more parents, teachers and students. We will apply these lessons in a meeting to fight the local city college's move to destroy a multi-racial educational complex that is already meeting kids' needs in a better way. Our PLP club is discussing how to make revolution primary in our presentation.

In two sharp workshops on immigrant-citizen solidarity, one minister movingly told about her church's courageous work to provide sanctuary for immigrant day-laborers and to support their efforts to organize against the worst forms of exploitation. A teacher-comrade then explained how the rulers' movement to attack immigrants is part of a larger ruling-class effort to build a mass base for much more repressive fascism to control ALL workers and to militarize the country for

vastly expanded imperialist war. She made a well-received proposal that we push our mass organizations to organize a solidarity demonstration spanning the Mexico-U.S. borders.

Finally, one of our leading comrades, a black worker, gave an inspiring speech about the racist health crisis facing our community and how the city health department admits this but will not ask for funds to reopen our health center, despite RECORD corporate profits in the city.

We recruited several more workers to this struggle. Most important of all, ten more workers and students have become regular CHALLENGE readers, and we expanded our Party study group. This is the most vital work: convincing our friends and ourselves that none of these extreme difficulties can be resolved without communist revolution, and more concretely, what that will mean for our families, our friends and the thousands more friends we plan to make.

RED CHURCHMOUSE

GI Families Got Folded Flags; Bosses Get Billions

I've been in the active-duty army for four years and spent a year in Iraq. The problem is not just the way the military is run. More body armor, more troops, or pulling out from the cities is not going to make imperialist war safer for the working class. Civilians suffer the most deaths and injuries and they're not issued any protection by anyone. Pulling out of the cities would only make it easier for commanders to rain artillery down on innocent workers.

"Better" commanders would not improve the occupation for our class. As long as we're fighting wars for the profit and power of a capitalist class, our lives will be on the line in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the next stop in the "war on terror" - all for the imperialists' benefit, not ours.

Some troops pay the ultimate price and are given extraordinary honors, medals, and some receive citizenship posthumously. Those of us who survive gather to grieve and pay our respects. Military ceremonies make people think that troops die for something, like serving our country or our brothers and sisters in the combat zone. While the fallen did die for something, it's not freedom or something like that. It's for the U.S. bosses' money and power. Soldiers' loved ones receive folded flags and the bosses receive billions.

Knowing that our comrades died for no good reason is hard to swallow. While our feelings for the people who've passed are overwhelming, military funerals are just there to make people feel better about the war. The truth is they can replace any of us. All they need is more troops. To the capitalists, we're just bodies — we're useful when alive to fight their wars, and a quick write-off when we expire.

If you survive, they tell you the VA is there for you. But they cut the budget for the VA, close down hospitals, and second-guess your injuries. Nightmares, flashbacks, anger, guilt and inability to function may haunt you the rest of your life but VA services don't live up to the hype. The capitalist rulers need our tax dollars from the VA to pay for their wars. They question your claims and make getting expensive treatments difficult. It's cheaper to get



NEWS, ANALYSIS, POLITICS

CHALLENGE

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER

SEND \$15 TO CHALLENGE PERIODICALS, PO 808 BROOKLYN, NY 11202

fresh young bodies to fill your place than to fix broken troops.

Ads and recruiters say join the army to have a career but machine gunners, tank mechanics, and Nuclear Biological Chemical specialists are only useful to the military. Civilian employers are looking for civilian experience. Uncle Sam will not help you find a job. Somewhere between 30% and 50% of the homeless are veterans, but the recruiter didn't tell you that. Unemployment is high today but it's even higher among veterans, especially blacks, Latinos, immigrants and the poor. Did you see any recruiting commercials mention that one? You might not have joined if you did. Then again, you may not have had a real choice.

Capitalism is behind all these things. Solving capitalist-created problems for good — a war we and our class don't benefit from; harassment by the leadership; injuries caused by the profit wars; getting everyone decent employment; re-uniting all troops with our loved ones back home — solving all this depends on ending class society, sweeping away imperialism with communist revolution. Nothing less can honor and avenge the deaths of our class brothers and sisters.

RED VET

U.S. Ambassador, FMLN in Bed Together

The U.S. ambassador to El Salvador, Douglas Barclay, surprised many with a speech openly ordering President Tony Saca to fight corruption throughout his government.

Barclay stated that Salvadorans "have the right to feel secure in their home and public places, not only those who can pay private security guards." This representative of U.S. imperialism mainly wants to "take the criminals off the streets and put them in the jails," meaning an upgrade in their police force, with better-paid agents, bigger jails, special courts and emergency taxes. He also reiterated that business owners must pay the taxes they owe.

This urgent need for national unity and political will among the rulers forced businessmen, politicians and the government to propose a series of new repressive laws against the entire working class, including an "anti-terrorist" statute, Barclay's fascist aim.

And those happiest with this call were none other than the former guerrillas now-turned-electoral-party FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front). Ironically, FMLN spokesperson Sigfrido Reyes said the ambassador's speech must have been written by a member of his party! FMLN leaders were satisfied with the ambassador's statement, adding, "We share in the urgent call for

unity to resolve this problem...what the ambassador has stated is what we've been proposing in the matter of security."

Clearly the FMLN, ARENA and all the other electoral parties are defenders of capitalism and its profiteers, both the imperialists and the Salvadoran bosses. This exposes the dangerous illusion that the FMLN is the option for the working class. PLP understands that a party of the working class never would advocate a fascist state to fight social injustice, poverty and unemployment. Neither executioner, Barclay or Saca, will solve our problems. The solution is to uproot capitalism, this oppressive and exploitative system, organizing and fighting for a real communist revolution.

PLP'ER, EL SALVADOR

ESL'ers Link Profits To Global Warming

My ESL classes recently participated in a project about global warming. Three hundred students from 20 different classes prepared 30-minute presentations for the 4-hour event. These classes are part of the Education Program of Local 1199, Homecare Division, in New York City.

The project reflected the union's emphasis on Democratic Party candidates and issues, specifically Al Gore and his book. Most of the ideas about solutions to global warming from the union and the classrooms dealt with individual responsibility in limiting the use of fuels, hair sprays, air conditioners and other pollutants.

I presented a number of questions to my class: "Are we all the same in creating global warming?" "Who are the biggest users of coal, oil and natural gas?" "Why do they use so much fossil fuel?" "Why do big corporations turn a blind eye to global warming?" "Remember New Orleans. The consequences of global warming have been and will be catastrophic. What are governments doing, or not doing, to protect people?"

My students debated the answers to these questions, in English and Spanish. One student responded that, "we are people at the bottom. The people at the top are guilty of the greatest pollution, as they seek profits and exploit us. As long as capitalism exists, we can try to make the situation better, but we won't be able to solve the problem." "I agree with you, Jasmin," I responded. Many students applauded.

On the day of the project after my class finished their presentations in English, four of my students spoke in Spanish about solutions, Jasmin included. A teacher in

continued on page 7

continued from Letters, page 6

the audience said, “I guess we need a revolution.”

“That’s right,” I said. After the presentation several students in the audience came up to speak to my students. “What they don’t say” said one student, “is the U.S., the richest country in the world, is the biggest polluter.” “That’s capitalism,” said Jasmin.

Jasmin has become a CHALLENGE reader and will attend her first PLP study group Saturday. Yes, communist leadership makes a difference.

A COMRADE

Auto Bosses Invade Old Socialist Bloc — At 1/5 The Wages

The fall of the Berlin Wall has proven to be deadly for millions of well-paid jobs in Western Europe and the U.S. The entry of countries in the former Soviet bloc into the European Union is proving a bonanza for Western and Asian auto companies. As tens of thousands of auto workers are laid off in the U.S., Britain, Germany, Italy and France, thousands of workers are being hired in Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Romania and the Czech Republic — at one-third to one-fifth the wages in Western Europe and the U.S.

The French automaker Peugeot Citroen has just opened an \$890 million factory in Trnava, Slovakia, while closing its plant near Coventry in Britain. The Czech Republic could nearly double its production to over a million cars in the next four years. “Carmakers from Europe, Asia and the U.S.” are “pouring billions of dollars of fresh investment into local factories” in Eastern Europe. (NY Times, 11/25) Even further eastward, GM just opened a plant near St. Petersburg, Russia to assemble the Chevrolet Captiva, a mid-size SUV. Hyundai is building a huge new assembly plant in the Czech Republic and Ford is moving production of its subcompact Ka from Spain to southern Poland, where Fiat is also setting up shop.

So capitalism is marching full tilt into the old socialist bloc. Meanwhile, it pits these low-wage workers against the higher-paid ones in Western Europe and the U.S. Capitalism’s bottom line, searching for ever-higher profits, always trumps workers’ lives. All the more reason for auto workers to unite across all borders against their common enemies among these companies. ☸

RED EYE



ON THE NEWS

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers.
Abbreviations: NYT = New York Times, GW Guardian Weekly (UK) FT = Financial Times

Capitalism, not culture, is black oppressor

For, decades, scholars and opinion-makers have been seduced by cultural explanations for economic problems. Recently, comedian Bill Cosby has caught the bug, leading him to inveigh against aspects of black culture he views as intimately linked to problems among African-Americans, from poverty to crime and incarceration.

Cosby is merely the latest and most visible in a long chain of cultural critics. Researchers Charles Murray (before turning to genetic explanations) and columnist Thomas Sowell have been making the “bad culture” argument about African-Americans for decades....but....

Black poverty fell 10.6 percentage points from 1993 to 2000 (from 33.1 to 22.5 percent) to reach its lowest level on record. Black child poverty fell an unprecedented 10.7 percentage points in five years (from 41.9 percent in 1995 to 31.2 percent in 2000).

The “culture of poverty” argument cannot explain these trends. Poor black people did not develop a “culture of success” in 1993 and then abandon it for a “culture of failure” in 2001.

What really happened was that in the 1990s, the job market finally tightened up to the point where less-advantaged workers had a bit of bargaining clout....

The record is clear: When economic opportunities are available to black Americans, they take them. When opportunities are scarce they fall behind, and culture has very little to do with it. (Washington Post, 11/13)

US aims to overthrow elected gov't

The US is arming Mahmoud Abba's Fatah organization for

Sammy Scheer

1954- 2006



“It’s O.K. to mess up, but never to give up.”

That lesson is what one of Sammy Scheer’s teenage nieces said she learned from knowing her uncle. That’s how all who knew and loved him would sum up his life — no matter what circumstances you find yourself in, no matter what problems might beset you, no matter what mistakes you might make, never give up.

Sammy tragically died of a heart attack recently at the age of 52. He had the good fortune to be born into a family that was filled with love and communist ideas. His father, Morty, was one of the founders of, and his mother Phyllis a member of the Progressive Labor Party. It is a testimony to Sammy that no matter what situation he faced, he never forgot what he learned from those two wonderful parents and from his Party.

In the early seventies, Sammy attended Erasmus Hall High School in Brooklyn and became known as a great anti-racist fighter. He joined the Challenge Corps, PLP’s youth group, and helped organize anti-Vietnam war marches and demonstrations. He became a leader of high school students and inspired many throughout the city.

On weekends, Sammy loved to take friends to Wo-Hop, a favorite local Chinese restaurant where people could sit for hours and talk and laugh. Sammy had tons of friends.

As a teenager, he began singing and playing the guitar with friends and at various political events. He was an accomplished guitarist with a melodic voice. He loved to sing songs about class struggle, love, about people fighting back, as well as about the beauty he saw around him. His favorites were Phil Ochs and Bob Dylan as well as coal mining songs and those on the PLP record. He did a mean rendition of “Clifford Glover,” describing the murder of a black youth in Brooklyn and how the cops got off.

Sammy was a long-time member of the PLP. As a young man in New York, Sammy was the comrade you could count on. He organized on construction sites, facing threats to his life by right-wing goons. He strongly defended comrades under attack and defended many youth in Brooklyn in demonstrations against police brutality. He would fly from Houston to Washington to march in our annual May Day celebration.

Even as he helped raise his own two children, Rebecca and Matthew, he looked on all the other chil-

dren that crossed his path as deserving of the same attention.

He continued to impart his ideas to his extended family, friends and co-workers. His wife Cyd told us that one of the things she most appreciated in Sammy was his ability to turn many of her family members in an anti-racist direction, overcoming the racist ideas that surrounded them from having grown up in the South.

One of his co-workers, a black man, spoke at his memorial service in Houston with great reverence. He said that Sammy’s “world outlook” treated him in a way that he hadn’t experienced with other white people in the South. Another co-worker, of Iranian descent, said much the same thing, relative to being treated as a human being with similar aspirations, not as someone “different” or “foreign.”

Sammy became a hospital worker in New York and continued in that job after he moved to Houston, organizing throughout. All those who spoke at the memorial service in Houston kept returning to one universal description of Sammy: he was a “good guy.” Often this comes across as a cliché, but in Sammy’s case he truly was a “good guy,” in the deepest sense of those words.

Sammy will be very much missed, but in the manner in which he lived his life he has bequeathed to us an understanding we all should treasure: yes, it’s O.K. to mess up, but we must never give up. ☸



a confrontation with Hamas that risks plunging Gaza into all-out civil war. It wants thousands of rifles to be sent to Fatah from Egypt and Jordan and is seeking to persuade Israel to permit the Badr brigade, a pro-Fatah militia stationed in Jordan, to cross into Gaza. (GW, 11/23)

US needed rubber, bought Brazilian slaves

Men were needed in the Amazon, 3,000 miles away, to harvest rubber for the Allied war effort, he was told, and it was his patriotic duty to serve.

More than 60 years after the end of World War II, Mr. Dos Santos and hundreds of other poor Brazilians who were dragged into service as rubber soldiers are still in the Amazon....

“We were duped, and then abandoned and forgotten,”

The program originated in an agreement between the United States and Brazil. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor had cut the United States off from its main source of rubber, in Malaya, and President Roosevelt persuaded Brazil’s dictator, Getúlio Vargas, to fill that strategic gap in return for millions of dollars in loans, credits and equipment....

More than 55,000 people, almost all of them from the drought-ridden and poverty-stricken northeast, were sent to the Amazon.....

The work was exhausting, dangerous and

unhealthy:....nearly half perished before Japan surrendered in September 1945.

“...Guys died of malaria, yellow fever, beriberi and hepatitis....” (NYT,11/23)

‘Anti-terror’ database logs war protests

An anti-terrorist database used by the Defense Department...included intelligence tips about antiwar planning meetings held at churches, libraries, college campuses and other locations, newly disclosed documents show.

One tip in the database in February 2005, for instance, noted that “a church service for peace” would be held in the New York City area the next-month. Another entry noted that antiwar protesters would be holding “nonviolence training” sessions at unidentified churches in Brooklyn and Manhattan.

“Veterans for Peace is a peaceful organizations,”...[one] entry said, but added there was potential that future protests “could become violent.” (NYT, 11/21)

DVD Review:

‘World Trade Center’ Movie Promotes Selfless Service for U.S. Fascism

On the surface “World Trade Center” (“WTC”) is a beautifully produced movie that tugs on your heart strings. Beneath the surface “WTC” pushes pro-cop, super patriotism, pro-war messages along with healthy doses of religious mysticism and sexism, each of which the U.S. ruling class needs to pave the way for increased fascism.

“WTC” follows two NYC Port Authority policemen who respond to the 9/11 attacks and get caught under the rubble of the World Trade towers. Much of the movie focuses on rookie officer Jimeno and Sergeant McLoughlin talking while trapped.

Like many films and TV shows about police, “WTC” tries to show that these thugs are really “just workers” too. The movie wants viewers to sympathize with cops who it claims are underpaid, insufficiently trained and lied to by the bosses. While everyone who works under capitalism struggles, workers should not feel bad for class traitors, like cops and scabs, who survive by making the rest of our lives worse. “WTC” obscures the role of police under capitalism. It is their job to carry out racist attacks against black and Latino youth as well as attack and jail workers who fight back.

Even if you don’t like cops, there are

times the movie forces you to root for the cops to return safely. The movie often cuts to scenes with Jimeno’s pregnant wife and both officers’ small children. Seeing these scenes makes you want to feel bad for two cops who were harassing homeless people and racially profiling teens in the first few scenes.

“WTC” also attempts to inspire the working class to serve U.S. bosses and fight in imperialist wars. People in various countries are shown saddened and horrified by the 9/11 attacks seen on their TVs. “WTC” gives the impression that people worldwide empathize with the U.S. government and support whatever actions it takes in response to 9/11 (and that they will even throw flowers at U.S. invaders!)

The whole movie follows Jimeno and McLoughlin because they are multi-racial poster people for national service. The U.S. ruling class has failed so far to use 9/11 to mobilize the working class to join the military, police or perform other types of national service.

One hero in “WTC” is a U.S. Marine who only refers to himself by his rank, never giving his first name. The movie emphasizes “the mission” over the character’s own self-preservation. As the Marine is walking around the rubble of the towers, he tells someone over his cell phone,

“A lot of good men will have to avenge this.” At the end of the movie you learn that the Marine re-enlisted and served two tours of duty in Iraq. “WTC” constantly tries to rehash feelings and anger about 9/11, using examples of selfless service, to inspire patriotic fervor and allegiance to the U.S. government.

Throughout “WTC,” different people talk about avenging “them,” “those bastards” and “the evildoers.” But the movie never mentions who “they” are and doesn’t discuss the root causes of 9/11, leaving viewers no alternative but to believe that the “war on terror” is justified.

“WTC” uses religion as an ideological prop for its pro-war message. The Marine is supposedly called to NYC by god. When he reaches the rubble he looks at the smoke from the ruins and proclaims that god put up a curtain to shield everyone from what they’re not prepared to see. However the anti-scientific director omits the smoke’s most significant effect — hazardous pollution that is still killing 9/11 rescuers and lower Manhattan residents — and instead emphasizes religion. The message is: don’t question things because god works in mysterious ways.

“WTC” also aims to win the U.S. work-



ing class to sexism. “WTC” focuses on the cops’ wives falling apart. “WTC” didn’t spend time showing how hard these women worked to raise their children and keep their households together. Instead, “WTC” shows other male relatives comforting the wives while they’re hysterical.

Many things happened at the World Trade Center on 9/11. Many of them showed the potential for a communist society — working-class people helping each other and addressing each other based on need, not money, “race” or gender. But the U.S. ruling class wants to channel workers’ instinct to help each other into supporting war and fascism. “WTC” helps them do just that. ☛

Bosses’ Culture Root of Worldwide Mass Murder of Women

On Nov. 25, activities and marches in many cities worldwide celebrated the International Day of Non-Violence Against Women. The day memorializes the 1960 murder of the three Mirabal sisters by goons of Dominican dictator Trujillo.

In El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, Central America, there were mass marches and other public actions protesting the countless murder of women in the last few years. Marchers in El Salvador also protested discrimination against, and sexual harassment of, women workers.

Violence against women is an international epidemic which has worsened in this period of endless wars, fascist terror and drug gangs:

- Recently, four prostitutes were brutally murdered and thrown in a ditch near Atlantic City, NJ’s glittering casinos. A serial killer is suspected.
- In Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, hundreds of women have been killed and raped in the last few years and the killers have never been brought to justice.
- In El Salvador, 314 women have been murdered from January to August this year, compared to 305 for the entire 2005. Most have gone unsolved.
- In Honduras, some 500 women have been killed in the last three years — 11% by their husbands or boyfriends and 23% killed by criminal drug gangs. The number of women murdered in Guatemala is even higher.

The sex slavery trade is another major cause of worldwide violence against women. It’s a



In Pakistan, women had to fight against sexist Hudood laws that restricted them from confronting men who had raped them. These laws required a woman to have 4 male Muslim witnesses to prove she was raped or face adultery charges herself for making such a claim. Women activists won a law that would allow them to bring these charges to secular courts instead. These crumbs to the struggle against sexism won’t outlaw the extreme oppression of women.

\$12 billion-a-year business, second only to the drug trade, involving over one million women and young girls, mainly from Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Eastern Europe. It is estimated brothels make \$15,000-a-year profit from each one of those women.

Many of the November 25 activities against these “femicides” called on the authorities to do something about them. This is like asking the fox to guard the chicken coop. The only measures the rulers will take are more police-state attacks against workers in general (see letter from El Salvador, p. 6). Others tend to blame men in general for these crimes, instead of the culture of capitalism which depicts women as sexual objects and creates the basis for this onslaught.

Communists must redouble our efforts to fight this anti-women culture and the male supremacist attitudes it builds, showing how the rulers turn men and women workers against each other, weakening our entire class, while reaping huge profits from the super-exploitation of women workers. ☛



Anti-Vietnam War PL’ers Whack HUAC

Cries of “U.S. get out of Vietnam!” resounded through the halls of Congress on August 16, 1966 when members of the year-old Progressive Labor Party challenged the anti-communist House Un-American Activities Committee’s (HUAC) attempt to crush the expanding anti-Vietnam War movement. Police dragged anti-war witnesses kicking and screaming from the hearing room while their constant shouting interrupted the HUAC session.

The witchhunt coincided with President Lyndon Johnson’s and the U.S. ruling class’s escalation of the imperialist war against the workers and peasants of Vietnam. The rulers subpoenaed a half dozen PLP members, figuring they could split the movement through a red-baiting attack on its most advanced section. But HUAC only succeeded in exposing itself, helping PLP to spread our communist ideas. The mass media was forced to report our activities and photograph our militancy.

As HUAC announced it would sponsor legislation that “would make it a crime to aid anyone engaged in hostilities against the United States,” (NY Times,



8/17/66), hundreds of demonstrators streamed into Washington on a mid-summer work-day to protest the witch-hunt.

When the first “friendly” witness, Philip Luce — a stoolpigeon and former member of PL — took the stand, a PLP member stood up and yelled, “Let’s stop this fink testimony and get the U.S. out of Vietnam!” The cops immediately dragged him from the hearing room as he continued to scream, “U.S. get out of Vietnam!” to much applause. A photo depicting the PL’er with his mouth wide open shouting that anti-imperialist slogan appeared on the front page of every major newspaper in the country. (see above photo)

With signs painted in the halls proclaiming, “Whack HUAC!” the committee was made to look like Keystone Kops in newspaper cartoons and soon lost its effectiveness, eventually being disbanded. The PLP-led action helped spur the anti-war movement to greater and more advanced heights, influencing many to drop the liberal “Stop the bombing” slogan and adopt PLP’s answer: “U.S. Imperialism Get Out of Vietnam Now!” It also put the nail in HUAC’s coffin, which the ruling class abandoned as causing more trouble than it was worth to them. ☛